

Question 8: \$70,000,000 Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond

Preserving Land, Protecting Water, and Creating Recreation Opportunities

Funds from the 2000 Open Space and Recreation and Clean Water Bonds have almost run out. But needs for open space, water protection and recreation opportunities are increasing. Population growth and expansion into rural areas are causing pressure on three key elements of our quality of life:

- *Open space*
- *Water quality*
- *Recreation resources*



The \$70 million **Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond**, which will appear on the ballot this November as **Question 8**, offers to help address these pressures by continuing to fund strategic investments in the following key areas.

Preserving open space and farmland. We are losing access to locally grown farm products and to our natural landscapes and open vistas. The remaining green and open spaces are quickly being lost to development. We need to preserve these valuable lands.

Protecting Rhode Island's waters. Rhode Islanders want to take action to ensure clean water. We need to

reduce pollutants from wastewater plants, septic systems and stormwater that flow into our rivers and streams and end up in Narragansett Bay. Excess nutrients from wastewater plants and nutrients and bacteria from stormwater runoff are key factors in the fish kills and beach closures of the past two summers. We need to help ensure the health of our waterways.

Improving Recreation Facilities. The opportunities for the public for hiking, watching nature or pursuing other recreation in cities or the countryside are shrinking. We need to make sure we have enough high quality opportunities so all Rhode Islanders can enjoy our public parks, beaches and recreation areas.



Question 8, the Open Space, Recreation, Bay and Watershed Protection Bond, offers to help restore eelgrass, saltmarshes and other important natural habitats (above, right) and to reduce beach closures and protect the vitality of the Rhode Island shoreline, a key aspect of our quality of life and the foundation for our tourism and recreation industries.

How Will The \$70,000,000 Bond Be Used?

OPEN SPACE

The \$25 million for Open Space Protection will leverage donations and federal grants to provide \$65 million to protect our communities' most productive farms and most valued open spaces, natural areas, shorelines, drinking water supplies and scenic areas. \$10 million of this will be available as grants to communities and land trusts.

RECREATION

The \$18 million for state and local Recreation Development will leverage matching funds resulting in \$29 million for parkland, playgrounds, ball fields, trails, greenway links, the Roger Williams Park and Zoo, historic Fort Adams and other recreation facilities.



Additional bond funding will allow the state to award grants to communities and land trusts to protect open space and farmlands such as Briggs Farm in East Greenwich (above). It will also allow Rhode Island to continue to build a system connecting greenways, bikepaths and trails as recommended in the state Greenspace and Greenways Plan (below, left).

wastewater treatment facilities will enable us to make substantial progress toward reducing nitrogen discharges and other pollutants.



The \$8.5 million investment in Clean Water Grants will leverage \$17 million and will allow more progress toward the goal of making the state's polluted water bodies fishable and swimmable. It will help our communities control storm water pollution; help farmers, marina operators, and other businesses reduce pollution that runs into the Bay and its tributaries after rainfalls; and help restore habitats along the waters' edge to keep pollutants from reaching streams, lakes and coastal waters.

BAY AND WATERSHED PROTECTION

The \$10.5 million investment in Wastewater Improvement Loans will finance a revolving loan fund that will leverage nearly \$30 million for improvements to wastewater treatment plants. The nutrient removal and other water quality projects at

DRINKING WATER PROTECTION

The \$8 million investment in Drinking Water Protection will allow the Rhode Island Water Resources Board to permanently protect groundwater and public drinking water supplies, including future well sites, to accommodate residential demand and economic development.

State of Rhode Island
Department of Environmental Management
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908
www.state.ri.us/dem

